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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FORGIVENESS AND MARITAL
ADJUSTMENT

BY



P. JAMES WALKER

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND
RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
DEGREE OF

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IN

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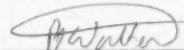
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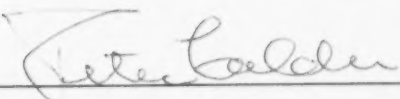
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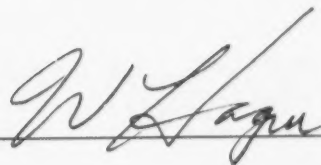
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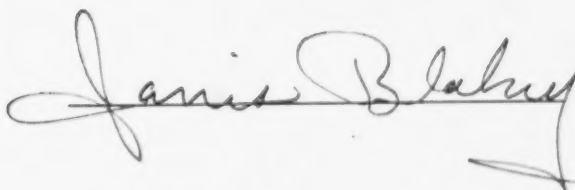
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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled The Relationship Between Forgiveness and Marital Adjustment submitted by P. James Walker in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education in Counselling Psychology


(Supervisor)





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ABSTRACT

Forty-eight married individuals completed the Enright Forgiveness Inventory (EFI) and the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS). It was hypothesized that forgiveness would be positively correlated with marital adjustment. As predicted, the total score and the subscale scores on the EFI correlated significantly with the DAS total score. The EFI total score also correlated significantly with the subscales on the DAS. No differences were found between men and women on forgiveness or marital adjustment scores. No differences were found between individual's who had been married less than 7 years and those who were married more than 12 years on both forgiveness scores and marital adjustment scores. A number of conclusions can be made from the results of this study. First, there seems to be a strong positive relationship between forgiveness and marriage adjustment. Second, men and women seem to be quite similar in their ability to forgive one another. Third, a high level of marital adjustment can be attained in early and later stages of marital life for both men and women.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Marriage is a unique relationship between two individuals. Individuals make a commitment to share their dreams, hopes, fears and lives with one another. This commitment also involves doing good to the other and being concerned with their well-being. As simple and as straight forward as this may sound, and in spite of such intentions or hopes, 8,483 marriages in Alberta ended in divorce in 1990 (Stats Canada, 1991).

Broken marriages, separation, and divorce are costly realities. The cost includes emotional scars for the couple, their children and others, as well as money and time in the legal system. The effects even reach the work place. The APA Practitioner (1990, cited in O'Leary & Smith, 1991) reported that marital problems, not alcohol or drug abuse was the number one inhibitor of productivity in the work force. Therefore research in the area of marriage adjustment is crucial. It has been quite useful to identify certain variables as helping couples adjust in their marriages. Teaching and activities based on such variables have been used with engaged and married couples alike resulting in positive effects on marriage adjustment (O'Leary & Smith, 1991).

Some clinicians have reported that forgiveness is a useful phenomenon in both marital therapy (Worthington & Diblasio, 1990) and individual psychotherapy (Hope, 1987; Hunter, 1978; Kaufman, 1984). Forgiveness may also prove to be an important factor in general marital adjustment.

One indicator of marital adjustment is marriage satisfaction (Rice, 1983). Many variables have been associated with marriage satisfaction, such as positive communication skills, affection expression and conformity to marital role expectations (Rice, 1983). However, little research has been done on the effect of forgiveness on marriage satisfactions scores.

Throughout life people are often emotionally hurt by persons close to them (Pingleton, 1989). One need only watch children at play to observe the full range of both compassionate and hurtful behavior that humans routinely enact. Even the smallest event can leave emotional scars on people. In the context of marriage, people are especially vulnerable to being hurt for several reasons. First they trust their partner and therefore relax their normal interpersonal defense strategies. Therefore, hurtful behavior can get through to do damage. Similarly, married partners tend to value each other's opinions. Thus, negative

remarks can be damaging. Also, married couples tend to disclose much of themselves, including weaknesses to each other. Therefore, more of each individual is exposed to possible hurt. The question is not whether a married person will or will not incur some hurts from their spouse, but how will they respond to injury?

When people are hurt in a way which is perceived to be unjust or undeserved they might respond in one of the three following ways. First they can overtly or covertly retaliate. In terms of justice, since the hurt was not deserved, the offended has the right to seek retribution or payment from the offender (Enright, Santos & Al-Mabuk, 1989; Hope, 1987). Usually such retribution would necessarily involve hurting the offender. Retaliation is likely to be a natural response to being hurt (Pingleton, 1989). Second, the offended could repress his or her feelings of resentment, hurt, bitterness, anger, and right to retaliate. Third, the offended could view the offender with benevolence and decline the opportunity to retaliate all the while knowing that he or she has the right to retaliate (Enright, Gassin & Wu, 1992). This third response is more commonly called forgiveness.

It can be argued that forgiveness is

psychologically more advantageous than the other two response types. Retaliation and repression do not aid the offended's own healing process and may even delay the process (Enright et al., 1989; Strong, 1977). The process of forgiveness results in the availability of psychological energy, previously used in repression or retaliation seeking activity, with which to deal with the original hurt (Hope, 1987; Kaufman, 1984). It also results in a release from any present or future effects which the offender would have on the offended through the hurtful incident (Fitzgibbons, 1986). In terms of marriage, retaliation could lead to increased hurtful behavior of both persons and an escalation of hurt in both persons leading to irreparable damage. Repression may allow for smoother relating in the short run but as increasing amounts of hurt are experienced negative effects of repression occur. As increasing amounts of energy are needed to maintain repression less is available for present moment relating (Hope, 1987), thus, interactions may become less satisfying over time. If the hurt, resentment and anger build to the point where they escape the defense mechanism, new hurts are likely result in over-reactions (Kaufman, 1984). Forgiveness, on the other hand, can result in freedom from each event and corresponding pain shortly after it happens (Hope,

1987; Kaufman, 1984). Therefore, by continually choosing to forgive, a couple can help support intimacy in their relationship.

The phenomenon of forgiveness deserves further exploration, especially in relation to marital adjustment. If forgiveness and marriage adjustment are related it may prove useful to emphasize it's importance in marriage preparation courses, counselling and materials. If couples go into a marriage knowing they will hurt one another and agreeing to make the effort to forgive one another, their success at adjusting to marriage may increase.

The main purpose of this study was to explore the possible connection between marriage adjustment, as measured by the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS), and forgiveness, as measured by the Enright Forgiveness Inventory (EFI). In addition, I attempted to explore the relationship between specific components of marriage adjustment identified by the DAS, and forgiveness. Items from both scales were analyzed to see which aspects of marriage and forgiveness were most difficult for respondents.

Forgiveness is defined by Enright, Gassin and Wu (1992) as

the overcoming of negative affect and judgement toward the offender, not by denying ourselves the

right to such affect or judgement, but by endeavoring to view the offender with compassion, benevolence, and love while recognizing that he or she has abandoned the right to them. (pg. 101)

Within the EFI there are three subscales of particular importance. High scores on the Affect subscale denotes the presence of positive emotions and the lack of negative emotions with regard to the offender. High scores on the Cognition subscale denote the presence of positive thoughts and the lack of negative thoughts towards the offender. And finally, high scores on the Behavior subscale denotes the presence of positive behaviors and the lack of negative behaviors towards the offender.

For the purposes of this study, attitude is defined as the sum total of one's affect, cognition and behavior directed towards the object of the attitude. Also note that the terms forgiveness, forgiveness process, forgiveness strategy and forgiveness behavior will all be used interchangeably, and thus all refer to the phenomenon of forgiveness as defined by Enright, Gassin and Wu (1992).

Rice (1983, pg 172) has defined marital adjustment as "the process of modifying, adapting, or altering individual and couple patterns of behavior

and interaction to achieve maximum satisfaction in the relationship." The DAS assesses four dimensions of marriage to attain an overall score of marital adjustment. First, it assesses dyadic consensus, which means the degree to which a married couple agree on important issues. Second, it assesses dyadic cohesion which indicates the degree to which individuals are attracted to each other. Third, the DAS assesses affectional-expression which is the degree to which there is conflict over the expression of affection. Finally, it also assesses dyadic satisfaction which is a measure of how satisfied the respondent is with the relationship. Each of these dimensions is represented by a subscale on the DAS.

In chapter 2 the reader will find a review of the literature on forgiveness and a concise review of the literature on marriage adjustment. In chapter 3, the method of investigation employed in this study is described. In chapter 4 the results of the study are presented. In chapter 5 the reader will find a summary and discussion of the findings.

Chapter II

Review of the Literature

In order to address the questions posed in the introduction of this thesis, the concepts of forgiveness and marriage adjustment will be discussed. The relevant literature will be discussed under the following subheadings: the phenomenon of forgiveness, and predictors of marriage adjustment.

The Phenomenon of Forgiveness

Forgiveness can only occur if a person unjustly experiences hurt from another person. The hurt can be psychological, emotional, physical or moral (Enright et al., 1991). Such hurt often engenders feelings of resentment, bitterness and anger towards an offender (Hope, 1987; Hunter, 1978; Kaufman, 1984). It can also result in less favourable cognitions and behaviors toward the offender (Enright et al., 1991). According to the offended's natural justice reasoning he or she has the right to seek retribution from the offender (Enright et al., 1984; Hope, 1987). Usually such retribution would involve retaliating against the offender either overtly or covertly. Such primitive reasoning is characterized by the saying, "an eye for

an eye and a tooth for a tooth". Forgiveness is representative of a more advanced form of reasoning which invites the forgiver to act out of mercy and love rather than bitterness and vengeance. The offended individual may choose to abandon their right to retaliate against the offender by viewing the offender with compassion and benevolence (Enright, Santos & Al-Mabuk, 1989; Kaufman, 1984). Choosing not to retaliate, and thus having mercy on the offender is the essence of forgiveness.

There are certain actions which are frequently confused with forgiveness such as condoning, excusing and pseudo-forgiveness (Enright et al., 1991). The differences between forgiveness and these concepts are important to understand. First, condoning an offender's hurtful behavior is simply putting up with injustice, while forgiveness is releasing the offender from retaliation despite injustice (Enright et al., 1991). Condoning leaves residual resentment in the offended while forgiveness gets rid of it with compassion and love (North, 1987 cited in Enright et al., 1991).

Excusing hurtful behavior is deciding that the hurtful event was not really hurtful while forgiveness involves the realization that harm was done (Enright

et al., 1991). Forgiveness is not a passive act of allowing angry feelings to diminish over time, rather it is an active struggle to change one's whole attitude, affect, behavior and cognition towards the offender (Enright et al., 1991). For example, the offended may find himself thinking negatively about the offender. In order to overcome such negative judgement he must consciously detect and change this thought while reminding himself that he has chosen to forgive the offender.

Some individuals may claim to have forgiven an offender when in reality they have utilized a defense mechanism to deal with the hurt and associated feelings and cognitions (Enright et al., 1991). This type of response is appropriately called pseudo-forgiveness and may involve such defense mechanisms as reaction-formation and denial (Enright et al., 1991). Jagers (1989) has suggested that premature or superficial forgiveness can result in the preservation of unresolved hurt, increased guilt over anger, and a perpetuation of an ingenuine level of toleration that can actually inhibit the development of intimacy and honesty between the offended and the offender. Therefore it is important to distinguish between true forgiveness and other problem resolution strategies.

This can be done by observing the offended's reactions to the offender. If bitterness, resentment and negative thoughts persist, it is unlikely that forgiveness is complete. In fact it may have never occurred at all. Also if the offended minimizes the damage done to them then it is likely that they have not faced the pain which is necessary for forgiveness to occur.

Enright et al. (1991) have developed a process model of forgiveness. There are several components to Enright et al.'s (1991) model. After injury the offended individual experiences and becomes aware of negative psychological consequences of the injury such as excessive defense mechanism activity, anger and hatred toward the offender, shame, obsessive emotional centering on the injury and cognitive rehearsal of the injury incident. The presence of such negative affect motivates the individual to search for a resolution to the problem.

The individual then must decide between various strategies such as forgiveness, retaliation, or condoning the incident. Forgiveness is likely to be chosen if there is a strong motivation to forgive. The individual's motivation to forgive is effected by a number of things such as his or her social

cognitive-developmental stage (discussed below), cultural conditioning, and philosophical or religious education. Once motivated, the individual must make a complete decision to forgive. In order to follow through with this decision the individual must now execute internal forgiveness strategies. For example, the individual may engender compassion towards the offender by viewing him or her in the context of the injustices that have occurred. For example, a man may be able to be more compassionate towards his father when he takes into account the fact that his father's parents were unusually cruel to him. This new perspective does not excuse the offender's behavior but helps the offended identify with the offender. Attempting to feel what the offender feels is another strategy used to develop empathy. Enright et al. (1991) state that the offended must at one point absorb the pain from the hurt. That is they must accept it and live it out. Finally, the offended experiences a kind of emotional release from negative affect towards the offender accompanied by the increase of positive affect towards the offender.

Hebl and Enright (1991) conducted a study in which they counselled 24 women over 65. The counselling sessions were designed according to

Enright et al.'s (1991) process model of forgiveness. Hebl and Enright (1991) found that these women had higher forgiveness profiles, less negative affect and more positive affect towards offenders, less harsh judgement of the offender and a greater willingness to help the offending person than a control group who received the same number of counselling sessions.

Donnelley's (1982 cited in Hope, 1987) description of the forgiveness process is slightly different than Enright et al.'s (1991). Donnelley (1982 cited in Hope, 1987) states that the offended must first acknowledging the reality of the hurt and pain caused by the offender (Donnelley, 1982, cited in Hope, 1987). Without an accurate assessment of how much pain was caused, forgiveness is not likely to be complete. That is, one has to know how much debt has been incurred before it can be canceled. Therefore the offended must face the reality of the injustice and thus their own pain. This involves honesty, courage and humility on the part of the offended since he or she must acknowledge his or her own weaknesses, neediness, and vulnerability to being hurt (Donnelley, 1982 cited in Hope, 1987).

The offended often needs to gather information in order to understand the reality of the injustice

(Rosenak & Harnden 1990). Sometimes the offended needs time to own and experience the anger and hurt before moving on to the next stage (Fitzgibbons, 1986; Rosenak & Harnden, 1990).

The offended must then decide to forgive while remembering that forgiveness is not easy (Donnelley, 1982 cited in Hope, 1987). Forgiveness involves a commitment since the offended is not likely to "feel like" forgiving. Rather, the offended is most likely to "feel like" retaliating (Pingleton, 1989). Fitzgibbons (1986) suggests that emotional forgiveness (feeling like forgiving) is normally preceded by a significant amount of time and energy spent in intellectual forgiveness, and that it may take months or years before the offended feels emotional release. If forgiveness comes easily it could be that it is not true forgiveness but pseudo-forgiveness or some other strategy.

Finally, Donnelley (1982 cited in Hope, 1987) suggests that it is helpful to consider the negative consequences of not forgiving. Such consequences include not receiving forgiveness from oneself or from others (Donnelley, 1982 cited in Hope, 1987). Also, as discussed in the introduction, it means the loss of potential healing and resolution of the problem. I

think it is important to consider these consequences in order to help motivate oneself to stand in the decision to forgive when it is difficult to do so. Shontz and Rosenak (1988) go so far as to say that recognizing one's own past need for forgiveness is a prerequisite to being able to forgive another.

Both Enright et al. (1991) and Donnelley (1982, cited in Hope, 1987) emphasize the need for motivation in the forgiveness process. Enright et al. (1989) outline different motivations which can influence individuals to forgive within a social cognitive developmental model of forgiveness. Development starts with younger children in stages one and two being unable to forgive. Such children are only satisfied after retaliating. Their thinking reflects a misperception of the forgiveness concept, confusing it with justice problem solving strategies. In stage 3 and 4, individuals rely on social pressure to motivate them to forgive. In stage 5, individuals demonstrate a willingness to forgive if social harmony is restored by the act. Finally, in stage 6 individuals place no conditions on forgiveness and are motivated by love. Most subjects in Enright et al.'s (1989) sample showed evidence of two or more adjacent stages in their thinking.

Enright et al. (1989) found that adults tended to need the encouragement of higher religious authority figures to develop the willingness to forgive (stage 4). Enright et al. (1989) describe this type of forgiveness as still being conditional since it is not motivated by an unconditional love of others. Level six, being motivated by unconditional love, seems idealistic but some adults in Enright et al.'s (1989) sample were measured to be at this level.

Hunter (1978) describes yet another way of motivating oneself to forgive. The offended who accepts his or her own imperfections and potential to inflict pain on others can identify with and forgive the offender more easily than one who has not done so (Hunter, 1978). Once again this involves courage, honesty and humility on the part of the offended individual.

Considering the number of different motivations discussed in the literature it seems then that different people require different conditions in order to change their attitudes about past hurts and the people who caused them. Motivation type may interact with the degree and/or kind of hurt experienced to produce forgiveness. That is, it might be possible for one person to be intrinsically motivated to

forgive an offender for an offense which caused minimal hurt. However, the same person may need much social pressure to forgive an offender who has hurt them severely.

As described in Chapter I, there are many benefits to forgiveness. Forgiveness allows the hurting person to free up energy lost to repression or revenge seeking activities (Fitzgibbons, 1986; Hope, 1987; Kaufman, 1984). More specifically, Kaufman (1984) suggests that when a person is hurt by another and does not forgive they can become fixated at that time in their life, never free to use their energies fully in the present. The solution is to find the courage to release the past and take responsibility for the present by forgiving oneself and others (Kaufman, 1984).

Huang (1990, cited in Enright et al., 1992) has demonstrated an inverse relationship between forgiveness and blood pressure, as well as forgiveness and negative emotions. Al-Mabuk (1990, cited in Enright et al., 1992) found that persons who score high on forgiveness score low on measures of depression and anxiety while scoring high on measures of self-esteem. Hunter (1978) has observed that those clients who forgave the significant others in their

past tended to have a less egocentric or narcissistic view of the world, an increased capacity to form new object relations or modify old ones, and improved reality testing. Enright et al. (1989) and Wosnok (1990) suggest that the client is released from resentment and anger and that the past has less psychological effect on the client. Enright et al. (1989) also suggest that it is after the client has forgiven the offender that his or her own healing process begins. Wosnok (1990) suggests that by forgiving, the client allows him or herself to create new possibilities in life and in relationships. Also, complete reconciliation with the offender becomes a possibility after forgiveness (Enright et al. 1991).

Hunter (1978) has suggested that the use of forgiveness techniques with clients who exhibit grudgingness, habitual bitterness, or delusions of persecution (paranoia) can be quite effective. Kaufman (1984) suggests that using forgiveness techniques with clients exhibiting symptoms of conversion disorder, anxiety, pain, and obsessive/compulsive behaviors can be effective as well. Of course forgiveness can also be used to engender acceptance of oneself (Kaufman, 1984).

What about forgiveness in the context of

marriage? Thomas (1980) engaged in a dialogue with a group of married couples. The couples each got a chance to tell the story of their marriage. A common theme running throughout the stories was that each individual's capacity to forgive kept their marriages from dissolving. Couples reported that when each person was able to forgive the other, something happened in their relationship. They experienced a new level of acceptance and awareness of the marriage partner. Thomas (1980) concluded that forgiveness from the heart serves to deepen the marital relationship.

Thomas (1980) suggests that complete reconciliation calls for more than an attitude of acceptance and more than negotiation or compromise. Rather, forgiveness is the foundation of complete reconciliation (Enright et al., 1991; Thomas, 1980). Jagers (1989) states that forgiveness is essential for restoring trust between couples where one partner has had an affair.

Worthington and DiBlasio (1990) have designed a therapeutic intervention based on the phenomenon of forgiveness that may prove to be useful in marital counselling. Spouses are given the opportunity to seek their partner's forgiveness and to forgive their

partner as well. From a psychodynamic perspective, this intervention would be useful because it would result in the redirection of energy use from nonproductive activities surrounding the hurtful experience to problem solving activities with respect to the current relationship situation. Since there is more energy available, and attitudes towards each other are more positive, there is a higher chance of making progress towards resolving relationship and practical issues. This could then result in higher levels of marital adjustment.

Fitzgibbons (1986) suggests that individuals preparing for marriage should engage in activities aimed at forgiving significant people in their lives for past hurts. Then, once married they will be less likely to express misdirected anger at their spouses. Fitzgibbons (1986) also suggests that practicing forgiveness on a daily basis will decrease the chances of having anger blow-ups.

Predictors of Marriage Adjustment

Rice (1983) makes a distinction between marriage adjustment and marriage satisfaction. Rice (1983) believes that marriage satisfaction is the end product

of the process of marriage adjustment. Therefore marriage adjustment is not a goal in and of itself, but a means to achieve the goal of relationship satisfaction. After all, one could "adjust" to terrible relationship conditions and be miserable. This type of adjustment is certainly worth studying, however for the purposes of this study marriage adjustment must lead to relationship satisfaction.

From this perspective then, marriage satisfaction is an indicator of marriage adjustment (Rice, 1983; Spanier, 1976). Other indicators of marital adjustment are dyadic cohesion - the amount of attraction between spouses (Pittman & McKenry, 1983; Spanier, 1976); dyadic consensus - the degree to which couples agree on important issues (Spanier, 1976); and the degree to which couples are satisfied with the expression of affection in their relationship (Spanier, 1976).

Communication between spouses has been strongly associated with marital adjustment (Pittman & McKenry, 1983; Quinn & Davidson, 1986). Dean and Carlson (1984) found that communication was a stronger predictor of marital adjustment than situational and background variables. Gottman (1979, cited in O'Leary & Smith, 1991) reports that distressed couples

verbalize more negative statements, such as disagreements and criticisms, and fewer positive statements than non-distressed couples. Ting-Toomey (1983, cited in O'Leary & Smith, 1991) reports that distressed couples are more confrontive, complaining and defensive with their spouses than with others. Pittman and McKenry (1983) found that when couples rated their relationship as better than other couples, verbalized little hostility and evidenced low levels of self-disclosure anxiety, cohesion scores were high.

There has been some debate over the conflicting relationships between couple similarity and marital adjustment and couple complementarity and marital adjustment (O'Leary & Smith, 1991).

Hicks and Platt (1970, cited in Sharpley & Khan, 1980) found that similarity of attitudes between spouses was associated with positive marital adjustment. Meyer and Pepper (1977, cited in O'Leary & Smith, 1991) suggest that similarity of spousal needs for affiliation, aggression, autonomy, and nurturance is positively associated with marital adjustment.

Bentler and Newcomb (1978) completed a longitudinal study and found that the similarity of spousal personalities predicted marital status of couples 4 years after their weddings. However, Lewak,

Wakefield and Briggs (1985) did not find a relationship between marriage satisfaction and personality similarities. Sharpley and Khan (1980) found no significant relationship between the congruence of couple value-systems and marital adjustment. However, O'Leary and Smith (1991) suggest that, generally, research does support the notion that couples who are similar on various characteristics tend to adjust in their marriages better than couples who evidence less similarities.

Sharpley and Khan (1980) found that individuals whose primary value-system was people-oriented scored higher on marital adjustment than others. They also note that people with self-oriented value systems tend to be least happy in their marriages (Sharpley & Khan, 1980). They suggest that compromise is essential to marital adjustment and that self-oriented people compromise less than people-oriented individuals (Sharpley & Khan, 1980). It may also be that people-oriented individuals are more forgiving than self-oriented individuals. This, of course, needs empirical verification.

Margolin and Wampold (1981, cited in O'Leary & Smith, 1991) found that distressed couples tend to reciprocate negative behaviors more than non-

distressed couples. In terms of forgiveness, it seems that such couples engage in overt retaliation more often than non-distressed couples. Gottman et al. (1976, cited in O'Leary & Smith, 1991) found that distressed couples are less likely to interpret objectively positive statements from their spouse positively. Distressed couples also tend to interpret the intent of their spouses statements more negatively than they were meant to be (Schacter & O'Leary, 1985, cited in O'Leary & Smith, 1991). These errors in attribution could be the result of holding generally negative attitudes towards one's spouse which is likely to have formed through repeated experiences of hurt. If this is true then one could conclude that either non-distressed couples hurt each other less, resulting in more positive attitudes, or they engage in forgiveness strategies to deal with the hurts, since the results of forgiveness include a more positive attitude towards the offender. Another possibility is a combination of less hurt and more attempts at forgiveness. In any case, more research into this phenomenon is needed to verify such hypotheses.

Gender has been associated with marital adjustment scores (Rollins & Feldman, 1970 cited in

Pittman & McKenry (1983); Sharply & Khan, 1980). Men tend to have higher scores than women on general measures of marital adjustment (Sharpley & Khan, 1980). Also, Pittman and McKenry (1983) found that husbands had higher cohesion scores than wives.

There have been some interesting interactions between sex and other variables on predicting marital adjustment. Quinn and Davidson, (1986) found that recreational intimacy predicted marital adjustment scores for women but not for men. Dean and Carlson (1984) found that situational variables such as community satisfaction, health and friends were significantly related to men's marital adjustment scores but not women's.

Many other variables thought to be related to marital adjustment have been studied. Pittman and Mckenry (1983) identify many studies that found religiosity to be related to marital adjustment. Quinn and Davidson (1986) found that sexual intimacy was a strong predictor of marital adjustment for both men and women. Burgess and Wallin (1953, cited in Pittman & McKenry, 1983) found that involvement in extrafamilial activities was also positively related to marital adjustment.

O'Leary and Smith (1991) state that personal

characteristics such as neuroticism, impulsivity, emotional instability, irritability, psychopathology, fearfulness, and poor social adjustment are associated with poor marital adjustment (O'Leary & Smith, 1991). Wilcoxon and Hovestadt (1983) have found that marital adjustment is related to yearly family income. Lewak, Wakefield and Briggs (1985) did not find a relationship between marital satisfaction and IQ. Gingras, Adam and Chagnon (1983) found that marital adjustment scores were predicted by expressed satisfaction with the degree to which various needs were met by one's spouse, and by the perception of low levels of conflict.

To summarize, many important variables related to marital adjustment have been identified in the literature. One potentially important variable, forgiveness, has not been researched extensively, especially in relation to marital adjustment. Forgiveness, as defined in this chapter, could prove to be a key factor in marital adjustment. If so, it's relationship to other variables related to marital adjustment will have to be studied so as to give a clearer picture of the marriage adjustment process.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to determine if there is a relationship between marital adjustment and forgiveness. To this end the following methodology was adopted.

Instruments

A questionnaire designed to assess marital adjustment and forgiveness was constructed. This questionnaire included the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) and the Enright Forgiveness Inventory (EFI).

The DAS is a well-known, well-researched instrument used to assess relationship adjustment (Budd & Heilman, 1992). It was chosen to be used in this study for several reasons. First, it is a fairly reliable instrument. Spanier (1976) reports internal consistency coefficients ranging from 0.73 to 0.96 for the subscales and total scale. Second, the DAS is reasonably short and therefore would be less demanding of the participants time. Third, the DAS is composed of four subscales: dyadic satisfaction, dyadic cohesion, dyadic consensus and affectional-expression, which other measures of marriage adjustment lack. Therefore, using the DAS allows one

to see whether or not forgiveness is differentially related to specific indicators of marriage adjustment.

The EFI is in the process of being refined by Dr. Robert Enright and his team at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The version I used was developed according to responses made by an American population (Subkoviak, Enright, Wu, Gassin, Freedman, Olson and Sarinopoulos, 1992). Currently Dr. Enright and his team are collecting data from a number of other countries with the intent of producing a universal measure of forgiveness (personal communication, January, 1993).

There are 67 questions with 4 subscales and a validity check question. One of the subscales is designed to detect pseudo-forgiveness. That is, when respondents answer as if they had forgiven the person but really they had not. The other 3 scales include: present feelings toward the offender, present behaviors towards the offender and present thoughts about the offender. Each of these three subscales is broken down into two more sub-subscales, namely, positive and negative (feelings, behaviors, thoughts). For the purposes of this study these sub-subscales have not been considered. The standard procedure is as follows: Respondents are asked to think of the most

recent hurtful action which the other had done to them, write it down and rate the level of hurt experienced. They also record the approximate time when the event occurred. After that the respondents are asked to evaluate their current feelings, behaviors, and thoughts about the person. Those persons who have forgiven the offender more completely should tend to have more favorable ratings of that person. Those persons who have not forgiven the offender should report less favorable feelings, behaviors, and thoughts towards the offender.

Subkoviak et al. (1992a) found that the internal consistency coefficients of all the subscales and the total scale of the EFI ranged from 0.97 to 0.98. However, as Subkoviak et al. (1992a) state, these coefficients are based on the same sample data used to select the items for the inventory and thus are likely to be overestimates. Test-retest reliability coefficients ranged from 0.79 to 0.91 for the subscales and total scale (Subkoviak, Enright & Wu, 1992). Correlations between the three main subscales are reported to be 0.8 - 0.87 (Subkoviak et al., 1992). Thus, they do seem to be measuring a related construct. Pairwise t-tests between sub-subscales were significant suggesting that each sub-subscale

measures a slightly different aspect of the same construct (Subkoviak et al., 1992) However, Subkoviak et al. (1992) did not test differences between the major subscales of affect, behavior and cognition. At the end of the EFI is a question asking respondents to rate to what degree they think they have forgiven the offender. Subkoviak et al. (1992) found that this question correlated significantly with the subscales and total EFI scores ($r = 0.60 - 0.68$).

Method

The Marriage Questionnaire, which was composed of the DAS and EFI, was constructed (see Appendix). The order of the scales was counterbalanced across subjects. Phone numbers were randomly selected from the Edmonton telephone book. People were contacted and asked to participate in the study. Also, persons in two church groups (from different churches) and one aerobics class were asked to participate. Those who volunteered received the Marriage Relationship Questionnaire. It was estimated that the total questionnaire took 20 to 30 minutes for each participant to complete. Participants then returned the questionnaire in the inclosed self-addressed envelope (postage was prepaid).

Approximately 110 questionnaires were sent to

people who were contacted by telephone. Approximately 52 individuals returned the questionnaire. Of these, 17 questionnaires were not usable since they were either not filled out appropriately or respondents scored high on the pseudo-forgiveness scale of the EFI. Approximately 28 questionnaires were sent out to persons involved in either of the church groups or aerobics class. Sixteen of these were returned and 3 of them were not usable.

Research Questions

1. Is there a relationship between forgiveness and marital adjustment?
2. Is forgiveness related to the different indicators of marital adjustment, namely, dyadic consensus, dyadic satisfaction, dyadic cohesion and affectional-expression measured in the DAS?
3. Are the different components of forgiveness assessed in the EFI, namely, affect, behavior, and cognition related differentially to marital adjustment?
4. Does length of marriage relate to marital adjustment and forgiveness?
5. Is there a difference between men and women with regard to their forgiveness and marital adjustment

scores?

6. Which specific aspects of forgiveness and marital adjustment do participants report to be the most difficult or problematic?

Data Analysis

In order to answer question one a Pearson-product moment correlation was calculated on the DAS and EFI totals.

In order to test research question number two Pearson-product moment correlations were calculated on the DAS subscale scores and EFI total score.

In order to test research question number three Pearson-product moment correlations were calculated on the DAS total score and the EFI subscale scores. One step-wise multiple regression analysis was done in order to determine the additive effects of the EFI subscales.

In order to answer question four, t-tests were performed to assess whether or not there were significant differences between individuals who had been married less than 7 years and more than 12 years on DAS and EFI total scores.

In order to answer question five, t-tests were performed to assess differences between men and women on DAS and EFI total scores.

In order to answer question six, means and standard deviations were calculated for each of the individual items on the DAS and EFI.

The results of these analyses are reported in the following chapter.

CHAPTER IV

Results

The purpose of this study was to determine if there is a relationship between marital adjustment, as measured by the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS), and forgiveness, as measured by the Enright Forgiveness Inventory (EFI). To this end the data were analyzed and the following results were obtained.

Sample

Forty-eight married adults (17 males and 31 females) participated in this study. The age of these participants ranged from 24 to 63 years, with a mean of 36.4 years and a standard deviation of 8.2 years. Participants had been married for a mean of 11.6 years with a standard deviation of 8.1 years. The range was 1 to 42 years. Eighty-eight per cent of the participants were in their first marriage.

Results

Research Question Number One:

Is there a relationship between marriage adjustment and forgiveness?

To answer this question a Pearson-product moment correlation was calculated on the DAS and the EFI total scores.

The correlation between DAS and EFI total scores

was 0.83 ($p < 0.001$). As the correlation indicates, there does seem to be a strong relationship between marital adjustment, as measured by the DAS, and forgiveness, as measured by the EFI. Results of this analysis as well as further correlations are found in Table 1.

Research Question Number Two:

Are the different components of marital adjustment, namely, dyadic consensus, dyadic satisfaction, dyadic cohesion and affectional-expression related to forgiveness?

To answer this question Pearson-product moment correlations were calculated on DAS subscales scores and the EFI total scale score.

Correlations between EFI total and dyadic consensus, dyadic satisfaction, dyadic cohesion and affectional expression were 0.71, 0.68, 0.63 and 0.48 respectively ($p < 0.001$). Thus all the subscales of the DAS were related to forgiveness as measured by the EFI. This suggests that forgiveness is related to the degree to which couples agree on important issues, their satisfaction with their marriage, the degree to which they do activities together and the degree to which they agree with the expression of affection in the relationship.

Research Question Number Three:

Are the different components of forgiveness assessed in the EFI, namely, affect, behavior and cognition related differentially to marital adjustment?

To answer this question Pearson-product moment calculations were calculated on the DAS total scores and the EFI subscale scores.

Correlations between the DAS total scores and the affect, behavior and cognition subscale scores were 0.74, 0.69 and 0.76 respectively ($p < 0.001$). Thus it seems that the absence of negative emotion, behavior and cognition, and the presence of positive emotion, behavior and cognition towards one's spouse are all related to marriage adjustment.

In order to isolate differences in the relationships between EFI subscales and the DAS total a step-wise multiple regression was completed. The model was a significant predictor of DAS total scores ($p < 0.001$), and accounted for 67% of the variance. The affect and cognition subscales were significant predictors of DAS total scores ($p < 0.01$). Thus it appears that affect and cognitions towards spouses predicts individual marital adjustment and that behavior towards spouses plays less of a role in

predicting individual marital adjustment.

Table 1
Correlations Between the DAS and EFI

	DAS	Cons	Cohes	Satis	Affect	EFI	Affect	Behav	Cogn
Tot.						Tot.			
DAS	.86	.71	.83	.63		.83	.74	.69	.76
Consensus		.40	.65	.41		.71	.63	.59	.63
Cohesion			.45	.33		.63	.59	.47	.59
Satisfaction				.53		.68	.57	.58	.67
Affection						.48	.44	.40	.44
EFI Total							.89	.86	.88
Affect								.61	.65
Behavior									.69
Cognition									

Research Question Number Four:

Does length of marriage relate to marital adjustment and forgiveness?

To answer this question t-tests were performed to test differences between participants who had been married less than 7 years and those who had been married more than 12 years on the DAS and EFI total scores.

Means and standard deviations are recorded in Table 1. No significant differences between groups were found.

Table 2

Means and SD's of DAS and EFI Total Scores of Person's married for Shorter (N = 15) and Longer Durations (N = 16), and for Men (N = 17) and Women (N = 31)

	EFI (Total Scores)		DAS (Total Scores)	
	X	SD	X	SD
Married	323.4	26.3	143.3	13.3
(< 7 years)				
Married	315.9	37.7	135.9	15.8
(> 12 years)				
Male	318.8	27.9	139.2	10.0
Female	321.9	31.4	140.5	15.2

Research Question Number Five:

Is there a difference between men and women with regard to their marital adjustment and forgiveness scores?

To answer this question t-tests were performed

on men's and women's total scores on the DAS and EFI.

Means and standard deviations are recorded in Table 2. Differences were found to be non-significant.

Research Question Number Six:

Which aspects of forgiveness and marital adjustment do participants report to be the most difficult or problematic?

In order to answer this question means and standard deviations of each item in the EFI and DAS were calculated (see Table 3 and Table 4).

From Table 3 it can be seen that this sample of married people are quite well adjusted in their marriages. According to Spanier's (1989) norms, the means for this sample on all subscales and on the total scale are approximately 1 to 1.5 standard deviations above the population mean.

Mean responses to most items were generally quite similar however on the dyadic cohesion scale respondents reported laughing together and calmly discussing something significantly more often than working on a project together, having a stimulating exchange of ideas or engaging in outside interests together ($p < 0.01$).

From Table 4 it can be seen that this sample of

married people tended to score quite high on the EFI subscales and total scales. Compared to Subkoviak et al.'s (1992) original sample of college students and their parents, where the unjust hurt identified could have come from anyone, this sample scored considerably higher.

Table 3
Means and SD's of Each Item on the Dyadic Adjustment
Scale (DAS)

Item	X	SD
Dyadic Consensus: Range = 1 (always disagree) to 6 (always agree)		
1. Handling family finances	4.7	0.71
2. Matters of recreation	4.6	0.74
3. Religious matters	4.8	1.20
5. Friends	4.6	0.74
7. Conventionality	4.7	0.80
8. Philosophy of life	4.9	0.77
9. Ways of dealing with parents/inlaws	4.6	0.82
10. Aims, goals, & things believed important	4.8	0.70
11. Amount of time spent together	4.5	1.01
12. Making major decisions	4.9	0.91
13. Household tasks	4.3	0.95
14. Leisure time interests & activities	4.3	0.91
15. Career decisions	5.0	0.93
Subscale Score	60.7	6.64

Table 3 Continued
Means and SD's of Each Item on the Dyadic Adjustment
Scale (DAS)

Item	X	SD
Affectional Expression:		
4. Demonstrations of affection	4.5	1.00
6. Sex relations	4.3	1.06
29. Being too tired for sex (1=yes, 2=no)	1.4	0.49
30. Not showing love (1=yes, 2=no problem)	1.6	0.48
Subscale Score	11.9	2.40
Dyadic Satisfaction		
Range = 1 (negative) to 6 (positive)		
16. Absence of discussion/consideration of divorce/separation	5.4	0.70
17. Not leaving the house after a fight	5.3	0.72
18. How often are things going well?	4.8	0.83
19. Confiding in mate	4.8	1.00
20. Absence of regretting marriage	5.2	0.82
21. Absence of quarrelling	4.4	0.54

Table 3 Continued
Means and SD's of Each Item on the Dyadic Adjustment
Scale (DAS)

Item	X	SD
22. Not getting on each other's nerves	4.3	0.46
23. Kissing frequency: 1(poor) - 5(good)	4.3	0.93
31. Rating of happiness: 1(poor) - 7(perfect)	4.9	0.98
32. Feelings for the future of the marriage 1(poor) - 6(good)	5.0	0.58
Subscale Score	48.4	4.41
Dyadic Cohesion		
24. Mutual outside interests: 1(poor) - 5(good)	3.1	0.90
1 (poor) - 6 (good)		
25. Stimulating exchange of ideas	3.6	0.94
26. Laugh together	4.7	0.99
27. Calmly discuss something	4.5	0.98
28. Work together on a project	3.2	1.12
Subscale Score	19.3	3.79
Total DAS Score	140.1	13.52

Table 4
Means and SD's of Each Item on the Enright Forgiveness
Inventory

Item	X	SD
34. amount of hurt 1(none) to 5(a great deal)	3.5	1.01
Affect: 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree) "I feel _____ towards him/her."		
35. Warm	5.1	0.92
36. not Negative	5.4	0.85
37. Kindness	5.0	0.97
38. Happy	5.0	1.20
39. not Hostile	5.6	0.79
40. Positive	5.0	1.07
41. Tender	4.8	1.11
42. not Unloving	5.5	0.99
43. not Repulsed	5.7	0.80
44. not Resentment	5.2	1.19
45. Goodwill	4.9	1.02
46. not Angry	5.3	1.09
47. not Cold	5.4	1.07
48. not Dislike	5.8	0.73

Table 4 continued
Means and SD's of Each Item on the Enright Forgiveness
Inventory

Item	X	SD
49. Caring	5.3	0.94
50. not Bitter	5.7	0.72
51. Good	5.1	1.00
52. Affection	5.1	1.02
53. Friendly	5.1	1.01
54. not Disgust	5.8	0.53
Mean Item Score	5.3	----
Scale Score	105.4	13.66
Subkoviak et al.'s (1992) sample	76.3	27.06

Behavior: 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree)

"Regarding my spouse, I do _____"

55. Show friendship	5.1	0.69
56. not Avoid	5.2	1.14
57. not Ignore	5.2	0.99
58. not Neglect	5.1	0.91
59. Help	4.6	0.96
60. not Put him/her down	5.1	0.84
61. Treat gently	4.6	1.09

Table 4 continued
Means and SD's of Each Item on the Enright Forgiveness
Inventory

Item	X	SD
62. Be considerate	5.0	0.91
63. not Speak ill of him/her	5.4	1.18
64. Reach out to him/her	4.6	0.94
65. not Not attend to him/her	4.8	1.12
66. Lend him/her a hand	4.8	0.86
67. not Not speak to him/her	5.4	0.91
68. not Act negatively	5.1	1.06
69. Establish good relations with him/her	5.0	0.71
70. not Stay away	5.6	0.79
71. Do a favor	5.0	0.91
72. Aid him/her when in trouble	5.4	0.94
73. not Be biting when talking to him/her	4.8	1.18
74. Attend his/her party	5.0	1.18
Mean Item Score	5.0	----
Scale Score	100.8	10.53
Subkoviak et al.'s (1992) sample	87.02	23.24

Cognition: 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree)

Table 4 continued
Means and SD's of Each Item on the Enright Forgiveness
Inventory

Item	X	SD
"I think that he/she is _____."		
75. not Wretched	5.9	0.49
76. not Evil	6.0	0.14
77. not Horrible	5.9	0.47
78. Of good quality	5.6	0.70
79. Worthy of respect	5.6	0.70
80. not Dreadful	5.9	0.44
81. Loving	5.1	0.99
82. not Worthless	6.0	0.20
83. not Immoral	5.7	1.10
84. A good person	5.7	0.93
85. Nice	5.4	0.96
86. not Corrupt	5.9	0.37
87. not A bad per	5.9	0.37
"Regarding my spouse, I _____."		
88. Wish him/her well	5.7	0.85
89. not Disapprove of him/her	5.7	0.66
90. Think favorably of him/he	5.5	0.95
91. Hope he/she does well in life	5.8	0.45
92. not Condemn him/her	5.7	0.93

Table 4 continued
Means and SD's of Each Item on the Enright Forgiveness
Inventory

Item	X	SD
93. Hope he/she succeeds	5.8	0.43
94. Hope he/she finds happiness	5.9	0.39
Mean Item Score	5.7	----
Scale Score	114.6	9.18
Subkoviak et al.'s (1992) sample	93.2	23.11
Total Scale Score	320.8	29.92
Subkoviak et al.'s (1992) sample	256.5	69.43

CHAPTER 5

Summary and Discussion

The purpose of this study was to determine if there is a relationship between forgiveness, as measured by the Enright Forgiveness Inventory (EFI), and marriage adjustment, as measured by the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS). The results are summarized and discussed in this chapter.

The results of this study support the contention that forgiveness is related to marital adjustment. Not only was forgiveness found to be related to overall marital adjustment but it was found to relate to individual predictors of marital adjustment, namely, Dyadic satisfaction, dyadic consensus, dyadic cohesion and affectional expression, as well. As well, each subscale of the Enright Forgiveness Inventory (EFI), namely, affect, behavior and cognition, were related to marital adjustment. These correlations were particularly strong considering that the sample was composed of mainly above average individuals (in terms of marriage adjustment), thus resulting in a smaller range from within which variance could be observed. Consequently correlations from this sample could well be an underestimate of the general population correlation coefficient.

Since this study is a correlational study it is impossible to determine the exact nature of the relationship between forgiveness and marital adjustment. There are at least three possibilities. First, it could be that individuals who forgive their spouses for hurts maintain more positive attitudes (affect, behavior and cognition) towards their spouses, resulting in high levels of co-operation and compromise, which in turn results in high levels of marital adjustment. Also, as discussed in Chapter I and II, individuals who forgive their spouses for injuries should have more psychological energy available to use in present moment adjustment activities, such as problem solving. That is, less energy will be tied up by defense mechanisms that support the existence of the hurt and consequent negative attitudes in the unconscious. As well, less energy will be lost to overt or covert retribution-seeking activity.

Second, it could be that individuals who are well adjusted in their marriages find it easier to forgive their mates. Enright et al. (1991) propose that higher levels of hurt make forgiving the offender more difficult. Individuals who are well adjusted in their marriages may experience less hurt from their

partners, either in frequency or depth, and thus find forgiving them for the hurts that do occur relatively easy.

A third possibility is that the relationship between forgiveness and marital adjustment is bidirectional, not unidirectional. That is, individuals who forgive their spouses for hurting them are then able to adjust in the marriage better which in turn facilitates their ability to forgive their spouses. More research aimed at discovering the exact nature of the relationship found in this study is definitely needed.

Generalizations made from the results of this study are limited to individuals who have adjusted in their marriages at above average levels. If the first linear explanation of the relationship between forgiveness and marital adjustment is correct, then a sample of individuals who have average to below average marital adjustment scores should demonstrate moderate to strong correlations between marital adjustment and forgiveness. However, if marriage adjustment facilitates forgiveness behavior, then individuals who have average to below average adjustment scores may in fact be unable to forgive their spouses. Therefore, variation in marital

adjustment scores within that group may not have a corresponding variation of forgiveness scores. Thus, no relationship would exist for such individuals.

In this study, length of marriage and sex were both found to not be related to forgiveness or marriage adjustment. Apparently, positive marital adjustment and forgiveness behavior can occur for both men and women, and at any point in time in the duration of the marriage.

On nearly all items on the Marriage Relationship Questionnaire participants on average responded with uniformly high ratings. The exception to this was a difference found on the dyadic cohesion subscale of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale. Participants reported that they laughed together and calmly discussed things with their spouses at a high rate but that they worked on the same projects, had stimulating exchanges of ideas and engaged in outside interests together considerably less often. Mean scores on this scale were at least 1 SD above the mean norm score reported by Spanier (1989). Had the scores on laughing together and calmly discussing something been similar to the other items this difference would not have been cut in half. Thus it seems that individuals in this sample were slightly more cohesive with their mates

than the normal population in general but tended to be even more extreme when it came to laughing together or discussing calmly with one another.

The validity of the Enright Forgiveness Inventory is of concern since it is a new instrument. The logic behind the inventory is that individuals' attitudes towards their spouses are affected negatively by hurtful experiences and positively by forgiveness. That is, attitudes should become more negative after a hurtful experience than they were before the experience. Attitudes should remain relatively more negative unless the forgiveness process is initiated. Forgiveness then results in a restoration of positive attitudes towards the offending spouse. Therefore, given that all individuals are hurt by their spouses equally, individuals with higher attitude scores will necessarily have engaged in the forgiveness process. The problem is that with a cross-sectional design it is unclear as to how much of the variation observed in attitude scores is due to hurt and/or forgiveness and how much is due to other factors. Thus divergent validity of the EFI needs to be established. It is therefore critical to do longitudinal research whereby a causal relationship can be more easily inferred. In

order to support the validity of the EFI, a study should be done whereby participants periodically fill out the EFI over the course of six months. Attitudes towards one's spouse should become more negative after being hurt and should become more positive as the forgiveness process is initiated and completed.

Divergent validity of the EFI seems to be supported in this study. The correlation between amount of hurt and forgiveness (attitude) scores approached significance ($r = -0.25$, $p = 0.04$; posthoc analysis). This weak negative relationship could have been predicted. First the general relationship between amount of hurt and forgiveness (attitudes) should be negative (as discussed above). Second, the relationship should be weak in this sample since forgiveness (attitude) scores were quite high. That is, for participants in this study, forgiveness was relatively complete and thus the hurts identified by the participants should have had small effects on participants' attitudes towards their spouses.

Since the EFI is a new instrument, scale and subscale reliabilities were calculated as part of the posthoc analyses (internal consistency). The EFI total scale reliability was 0.96 (Cronbach's Alpha). The subscales, Affect, Behavior and Cognition, had

reliabilities of 0.95, 0.87 and 0.94 respectively (Cronbach's Alpha). Although they are quite high, these reliability coefficients are slightly lower than those reported by Subkoviak et al. (1992).

This study was an initial investigation into the possible relationship between forgiveness and marital adjustment. Findings support the contention that such a relationship exists. Research assessing the direction of the relationship between forgiveness and marital adjustment needs to be done. Also, research delineating the relative importance of forgiveness and the many other factors associated with marital adjustment would be useful. Finally, research into the specific factors which affect the forgiveness process, such as different motivational strategies, would also be useful.

If forgiveness significantly effects marriage adjustment (relative to other variables), then incorporating teachings and activities on forgiveness in marriage preparation courses, premarital counselling, marriage enrichment programs and marital counselling may help individuals more successfully adjust in their marriages. The strength of the relationship alone is enough to suggest that therapists consider emphasizing the forgiveness

process with their clients. If reconciliation is a therapeutic goal, forgiveness is a good place to start. When teaching or guiding clients in the art of forgiveness, therapists should emphasize the importance of overcoming both negative affect and negative judgement towards the offender and demonstrating these changes in behavior. This will help clients to forgive more completely. Clients should also be warned that time does not heal wounds, rather it is in their best interest to resolve hurts in the present. Clients should also be told that age is not a valid excuse for not being able to forgive their spouses. Most importantly, clients should be told that forgiveness is something they can do for themselves, not just for the offender, to facilitate their own personal healing.

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Appendix

Due to copyright restrictions, the Marriage Questionnaire, which consisted of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale and the Enright Forgiveness Inventory cannot be printed here. Interested readers will find items for the Dyadic Adjustment Scale in:

Spanier, G. B. (1976). Measuring dyadic adjustment: New scales for assessing the quality of marriage and similar dyads. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 38, 15-28.

Interested readers are also encouraged to contact Dr. Robert Enright at the University of Wisconsin-Maddison, for information on the Enright Forgiveness Inventory.